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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

Colombia to Hold Its Last Election Under the National Front

Secret

№ 37

23 January 1970
No. 0354/70B

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COLOMBIA TO HOLD ITS LAST ELECTION UNDER THE NATIONAL FRONT

On 19 April Colombia will hold general elections for the last time under the National Front system of government. As the election date draws nearer, the Liberal and Conservative parties, the two major political organizations that make up the Front, are becoming increasingly disunited, principally over what dissident politicians consider the imposition of Misael Pastrana as the official Front candidate. It is the Conservatives' turn to occupy the presidency, and although Pastrana is a Conservative, he was handpicked by Liberal President Lleras. Many Conservative politicians believe he will make a weak president, thus opening the way for a Liberal victory in 1974. The serious schisms in these two parties may add to the growing dissatisfaction among the population, which has become weary with an artificial arrangement that often only allows them to approve a candidate, not choose him. Political stability probably will deteriorate as election day approaches.

BACKGROUND

The "Grand Coalition," as the National Front is often called, will end in 1974, 16 years after its establishment. It has been a unique institution for Colombia and, indeed, for the world. It was designed in 1957 to force the country's two largest and bitterly antagonistic political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, to stop their politically motivated violence and to share power and office. The experiment was viewed by its formulators as a means to educate Colombians in the art of political compromise and to inculcate in the people the most difficult aspect of democratic political culture—the acceptance of the legitimacy of opposition. The coalition was also viewed as a means to retain real power in the hands of the social and economic elite while furthering Colombia's economic development.

The major feature of the Front, as set forth in constitutional amendments, was that the presidency would alternate between the two parties and that there would be parity for both in all public elective bodies, executive departments, and

administrative posts. One of the advantages of alternating the presidency purportedly was that over a 16-year period it would serve to educate the populace in democracy by accustoming Colombians to seeing the presidency shift peacefully between political parties. Decisions made by the legislative bodies required a two-thirds vote (recently changed to a simple majority) for passage, thus presumably forcing bipartisan cooperation on all legislation.

Over the years the coalition has succeeded in many of its aims. Most importantly, it has brought political peace, no small accomplishment in view of the fact that perhaps 100,000 or more people lost their lives in politically inspired violence from 1948 to 1958. Moreover, the Front has helped to build political consensus and stability, and has restored a large measure of political liberty. Economic progress has been favorable, especially since late 1960, and in the past two years President Lleras has been able to bring balance-of-payments difficulties under control and to reduce inflationary pressures. The country has entered a period of political stability and

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economic growth (around six percent in the past two years) under the National Front system.

A price has been paid for these accomplishments, however. An increasingly high rate of voter abstention has meant that the government's claim to a solid popular base has become less and less credible. Factionalism among the political parties has also been a serious and persistent problem. Elections have made it obvious that there are important segments of the party faithful who do not subscribe wholeheartedly to the idea of joining forces with ancient enemies but who instead long for predominance.

Under the Front, only the two major parties can legally participate in the elections. These parties, however, are composed of various factions that are in effect separate parties. For example, the Conservative Party is divided into two major factions, the Ospinistas (named after former president Mariano Ospina Perez), and the Lauro-Alzatistas (made up of the followers of ex-president Laureano Gomez and Gilberto Alzate). In addition, other parties such as the National Popular Alliance and the Liberal Revolutionary Movement of the People—MRL del Pueblo—(the Communist Front) can run slates by calling themselves Conservatives or Liberals. It has always been legally possible for a group that is opposed to the concept of the National Front to win a majority in a general election. Such an outcome would call into question not only the particular composition of the government, but also the fate of programs formulated by both parties. As a result, the main issue in past elections has centered on the continuation of the Front.

CHOOSING THE FRONT CANDIDATE

Until last summer, former ambassador to the US Misael Pastrana was the favorite presidential candidate of the two major parties and enjoyed

the firm backing of most of the party leaders. After he returned to Colombia in mid-September, however, Pastrana's political image suffered from a series of faux pas made by him and his backers. For example, Pastrana's prestige dropped along with that of President Lleras, his sponsor, when Lleras misjudged the degree of public interest in charges of influence-peddling made by dissident Liberal Senator Vives against two key members of the Lleras administration. Although the President put his full prestige behind the two men, subsequent investigations forced both to resign.

Mariano Ospina, the leader of the majority faction of the Conservative Party, also miscalculated. He concealed his preference for Pastrana in hopes of holding a free convention that would merge all factions and arouse interest in the selection of a candidate. But in the process, Ospina allowed several men with regional strength to run as favorite sons, fully expecting that they would later rally to Pastrana at Ospina's request. Ospina, however, lost control of the convention, which was held in early November. Five minor candidates formed a "syndicate" to stop Pastrana, and on the first ballot, Atlantic Coast favorite Evaristo Sourdis won more votes than Pastrana but fewer than the required two-thirds majority. In a second ballot Pastrana and Sourdis tied.

Conservative leaders were unable to compromise, so both names were proposed to the Liberal convention, which also had to approve the candidate. On 5 December the Liberals finally chose Pastrana as the official candidate, but almost 100 of the 600 delegates to the convention walked out in protest against this prearranged selection. The dissidents threatened to organize a "popular" convention to pick their own candidate, but this convention has not yet materialized. Many of the dissidents favored maverick Conservative Belisario Betancur, who had been selected by his own "popular" convention in late October.

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Pastrana has emerged as a rather unimpressive candidate. He has been guilty of many serious errors in his effort to win the support of party leaders and of the general public, and he does not have a regional base of political support. He has never been elected to any office, and he looks more like a middle-of-the-road bureaucrat than a dynamic political leader. Many view him as a "puppet" of the establishment.

THE OTHER CANDIDATES

At least three candidates other than Pastrana will participate in the coming elections, all under the Conservative Party label, as required. The most formidable is ex-dictator General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, leader of the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO), a rightist political grouping that opposes the National Front system. The demagogic ANAPO, which was formally organized in 1961, has participated in presidential and congressional elections since 1962, aiming its appeal at the middle and lower classes. Rojas' supporters are mainly from certain sectors of the urban poor, retired military personnel and government employees, segments of the rural population, and other groups that benefited from Rojas' presidency from 1953 to 1957. More recently, Rojas reportedly has picked up the support of various political groups, including the Communists and other leftists.

There are indications that dissident Senator Vives and his followers are forming a new political movement to support Rojas' presidential ambitions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Vives will be a valuable addition to the Rojas camp and will draw voters who oppose the government's Front candidate. Rojas has also been told by some of his followers that he has the almost unanimous support of retired non-

commissioned officers—a not at all unlikely development.

Evaristo Sourdis was not a real presidential contender before the Conservative convention. He does not have as much political support as the convention vote would indicate because his strength is based primarily on the anti-Pastrana vote. Nevertheless, Sourdis can count on votes from Atlantic Coast areas, and a group of over 100 Conservative leaders recently issued a declaration of support for his candidacy. Most of them are from the coastal departments and represent the majority of the syndicate that supported him during the abortive Conservative convention, but he has picked up support in other areas as well.

Belisario Betancur could be Pastrana's most dangerous opponent. His "popular" convention in late October was an indication of mounting discontent within Conservative ranks, especially regarding the long domination of the party by the Ospina family. He enjoys the support of the Union of Colombian Workers, the country's largest labor organization. This is significant in itself because the democratic labor movement has never before become involved in a presidential election. Betancur also has the support of the small Social Christian Democratic Party and its youth group and of former President Valencia. Although Betancur was not successful in his drive to become the Front's official candidate, he has accepted the platform for the next administration agreed to by the leadership of both parties. Betancur has run a much more professional campaign than has the Front's standard-bearer, and he appears to have more genuine popular appeal. In his campaign appearances, his charisma has gained him widespread support from the middle classes and the labor elements.

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VOTER APATHY

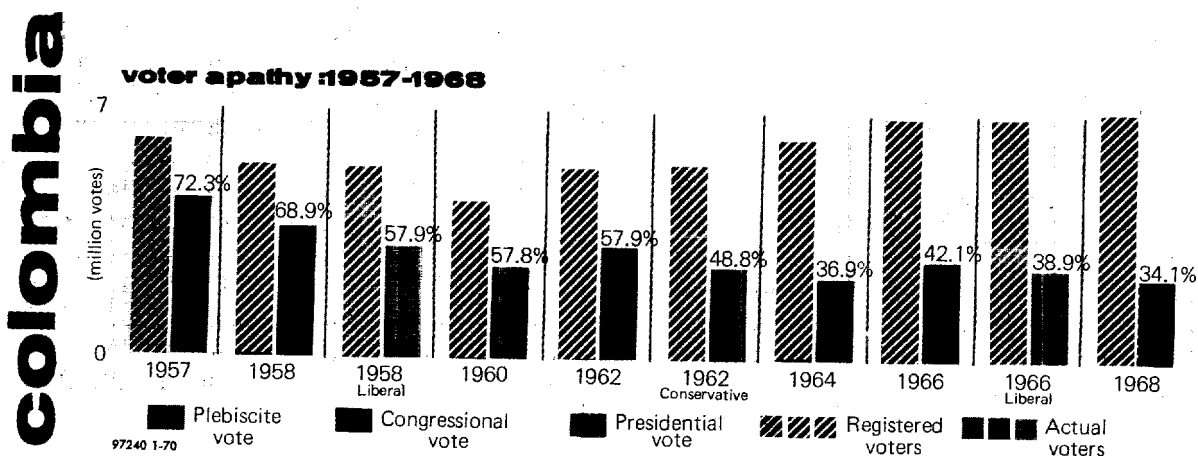
The political turmoil that surrounded the selection of a presidential candidate is more than just a protest against the National Front. It is symptomatic of a political system that has been led by a small number of wealthy, powerful men for more than a generation. The observance of the 20th anniversary of the Bogotazo (when popular Liberal leader Jorge Gaitan was killed, on 9 April 1948, and the bloody political violence began) brought home to some the realization that most of the names in the news on that infamous day still dominate Colombian politics—Ospina, Lleras, and others. New and fresh faces in the traditional parties are a rarity, not because the “grand old men” have won out against challenges, but because such challenges have rarely occurred. The traditional parties have no mechanism for training and pushing promising young leaders. This situation drains the parties of their vitality and reduces their appeal to the young.

Electoral participation has decreased steadily since the plebiscite in 1957, when the National Front system was approved. In the congressional elections of 1968, the most recent, only about 34 percent of the eligible voters exercised their right.

Voter abstention is indicative of the apathy exhibited by a majority of Colombians toward the political process that keeps them from exercising a free choice. Part of the explanation for this apathy can be found in the narrow confines in which political activity is conducted. The two traditional parties historically have been elitist and personalistic in character, and the loyalties of the masses of ordinary Colombians who call themselves Liberals or Conservatives have usually been toward the parties regardless of specific policies.

There are indications already that leftist extremist students are forming nationwide committees to encourage even more abstentionism in protest of the “establishment.” Another group made up of dissident Roman Catholic priests wants its followers to boycott the elections because it considers them a fraud perpetrated by the country’s ruling oligarchy in order to maintain the status quo and to continue exploiting the poor and oppressed.

On the other hand, because of the lively competition, voter participation may increase. The political infighting and the wide choice of candidates make the election attractive to those



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that have complained in the past that the president was preselected. Furthermore, both the presidential and legislative elections will be held on the same day, which has not been the case in the past.

The small Colombian Communist Party is already marshaling its supporters to vote, inasmuch as this is the first election in which other than the two major parties could participate at the municipal and departmental levels.

CONCLUSIONS

The circumstances surrounding the election make it clear that a strong president will be of paramount importance if the National Front is to be kept intact until it must be disbanded in 1974. Certain Conservative politicians believe that the country is not ready to return to full democratic processes and are urging that the Front be extended. Liberal Party leaders oppose such a suggestion because their party is the largest in the country and they stand to gain the most in open elections.

The plethora of presidential aspirants may well keep any one of them from receiving a large popular mandate. Even more so than in the past few years, however, the new president will be

faced with a hostile or often noncooperative congress and coalition because the losing candidates will have large numbers of supporters in elective legislative positions.

Only a strong president will be able to ensure Colombia's continued economic development and political stability. Renewed political activity by all parties at the municipal and departmental levels in the April election will result in an increase in anti-Front activity. Moreover, during the next four years, elements of the Liberal and Conservative parties will desert the Front and will resume normal political activity, which could lead to a renewal of politically inspired violence.

If the new president is unwilling or unable to deal forcefully with such a development, there may be mounting pressure within the military for a take-over of the government. The military probably would rule until another arrangement such as the Front could be established. In any event, it appears that whoever emerges victorious will have a difficult presidency. Should Pastrana win, he would govern with the full support of the National Front machinery, but even so, his presidency probably would be the most difficult in the Front's history.

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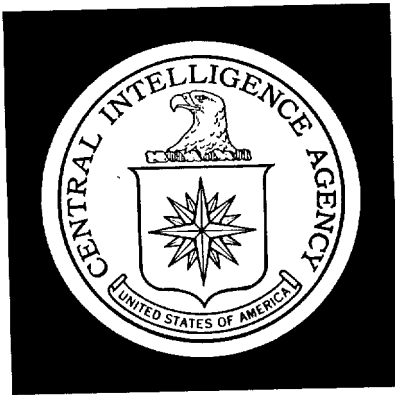
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(Information as of noon EST, 22 January 1970)

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A recent meeting between a Soviet Foreign Ministry official and the Spanish foreign minister enhances the possibility that some form of relations will be established between the two countries.

MOSCOW IS SENSITIVE ON STRATEGIC ARMS ISSUE

15

The Soviet press has treated the preliminary round of strategic arms limitations talks (SALT) as a success, but Moscow continues to be wary of possible US missile developments.

NATO STUDIES FORCE REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE

16

A special working group is getting down to cases in defining ways in which opposing military units of NATO and the Warsaw Pact might be scaled down while retaining a balance of forces.

FINNISH COMMUNISTS AGREE TO COMPROMISE

17

The liberal and conservative wings of the Finnish Communist Party have reached an elaborate compromise averting a final split in the party.

EASTERN EUROPE MUTES MILITARY SPENDING PLANS

18

The smaller increases in spending may be due in part to the cyclical nature of expenditures for military imports.

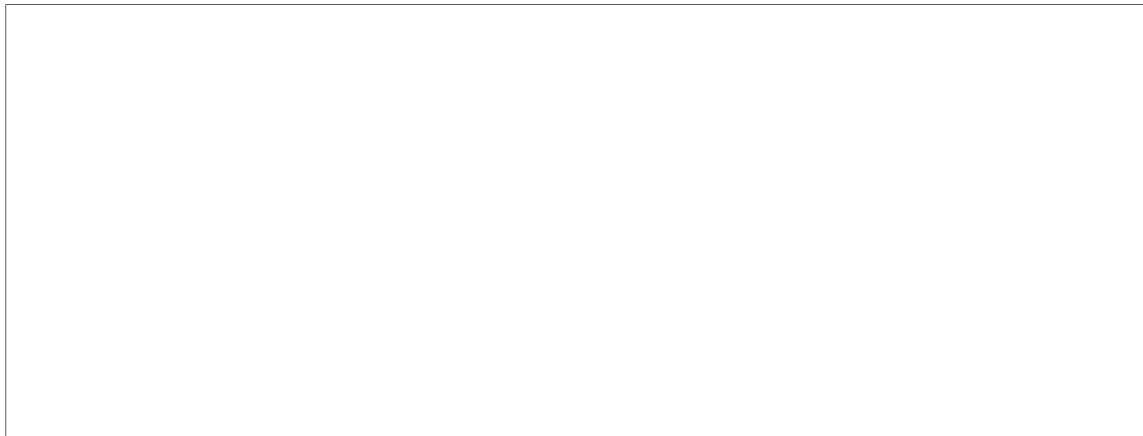
ROMANIA OPTIMISTIC ABOUT RELATIONS WITH THE WARSAW PACT

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Premier Maurer has indicated cautious confidence in Bucharest's ability to discharge its obligations to the pact without compromising its independence.

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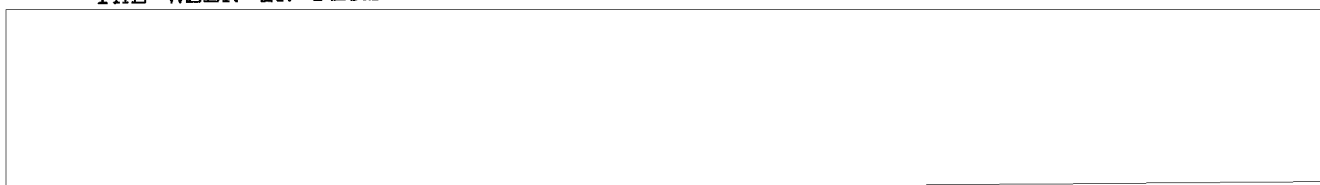
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NIGERIAN REOCCUPATION OF BIAFRA PROCEEDING

24

The federal government has encountered no serious security problems in the former secessionist enclave, but General Ojukwu has not yet given up the Biafran cause.

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LATIN AMERICAN NAVIES MOVING TO ACQUIRE MODERN SHIPS

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Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru are well along in their plans to obtain new ships for their navies. These purchases may improve the rather limited capabilities of the fleets involved, but they will not do much to change the navies' respective strengths.

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- COSTA RICAN ELECTIONS APPROACH 28
Jose Figueres appears to have the lead over fellow
ex-president Mario Echandi for the presidential elec-
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- CUBAN SUGAR HARVEST OFF SCHEDULE 29
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- FRICTION CONTINUES BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND GUYANA 30
Guyanese nervousness about Venezuela's intentions in
deploying troops to the Guyana border, along with the
proximity of the armed forces of the two countries,
could result in border incidents.
- COLOMBIA TO HOLD ITS LAST ELECTION UNDER THE NATIONAL FRONT
The general elections on 19 April are scheduled to
be the last under the National Front system, which
has brought political peace and economic development
to the country. The Front's presidential candidate,
Miguel Pastrana, is already running into trouble;
with three other candidates participating, the out-
come is in doubt.

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SECRET**FAR EAST**

The Chinese Communists exhibited an unusually positive approach to the Sino-US talks that reopened this week in Warsaw by having their diplomats and officials abroad show a warm and forthcoming attitude toward their US counterparts. Chinese officials had emphasized prior to the meeting in Warsaw on 20 January that Washington's commitments to the Nationalist government on Taiwan would continue to be the central issue for the Communists, but they left the impression that Peking does not intend to use the Taiwan issue as an excuse to make the talks overly difficult at this time. The Chinese probably judge that even hints of Sino-US accommodation will greatly alarm the Chinese Nationalists. Peking also would hope to aggravate Soviet fears of a Sino-US rapprochement.

The pacification program in South Vietnam is seriously affecting the efforts of some Communist forces to procure and transport foodstuffs and supplies. Two recent Liberation Radio broadcasts urged Communist cadre to take advantage of the Tet holidays to do missionary work among the people in government-controlled areas and called for renewed attacks on the pacification program. The tone of the broadcasts suggested that the Communists believe they face an uphill fight to roll back pacification and recapture people they once dominated.

North Vietnamese comments on Hanoi's economic plan for 1970 suggest that efforts this year are to be focused on increasing the production of food and consumer goods. Hanoi's intention apparently is to reduce both the massive foreign inputs that have been necessary in the past few years and the grumbling among its citizenry about the lack of significant improvement in their circumstances since the bombing stopped in 1968. Reconstruction of heavy industry has been assigned a secondary priority, reflecting in part North Vietnamese fears that the US bombing might be resumed.

Chinese Communist road building in north Laos may be pushed to the Mekong River this dry season. Communist survey teams have been observed placing markers south of Muong Houn, and the Pathet Lao are quoted by local villagers as saying the road will be completed to Pak Beng, which is just north of the river, in 1970. On the military scene, government guerrillas have been pushed out of important positions covering approaches to the Plaine des Jarres in recent days, and the Communists now have a nearly unimpeded route for bringing men and supplies to the southeastern edge of the Plaine.

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VIETNAM

Communist forces in the South apparently will direct much of their effort during their spring campaign toward trying to undercut Saigon's pacification program. The direction taken by enemy activity that is expected to heighten around the Tet holidays (6-8 February) will provide some measure of the enemy's concern on this matter.

Continuing references to the disruptive effects of pacification on enemy attempts to procure and transport foodstuffs and supplies have cropped up [redacted]

[redacted] supply elements from the North Vietnamese 18th Regiment were particularly concerned about moving rice from the coastal lowlands through pacified areas to Communist base camps in the mountains to the west. [redacted]

the goal of scheduled offensive operations is to secure food sources along the coast in the northern provinces, which have recently been denied to the Communists by the pacification program.

Two Liberation Radio broadcasts late last week tend to buttress the claims of officials in Saigon [redacted]

[redacted] that the recent advances made in pacification are curtailing the enemy's ability to operate in more and more areas. The radio commentaries, which stressed the need to restore Viet Cong access to the people in rural areas, in-

cluded some very defensive passages. They urged Communist cadre to take advantage of the Tet holidays to do missionary work among the people in government-controlled areas and called for renewed attacks on the pacification program. The tone of the broadcasts suggests that the Communists believe they face an uphill fight to roll back pacification and recapture people they once dominated.

Most Communist exhortations catalog various weaknesses and problems that the cadres are expected to redress in order to improve their performance, but such propaganda sermons do not usually admit that Saigon has been doing an effective job. One of the recent broadcasts, however, acknowledged the destruction of some of the enemy's infrastructure and revolutionary organizations. Pacification, according to the broadcast, has "nibbled away at liberated areas, actively built up the puppet administration in rural areas," and extended the scope of Saigon's authority over "sources of manpower and material supply." The other recent broadcast, by using such terms as "regain" and "protect," strongly suggested that the Communists acknowledge that their need is to recoup losses rather than merely to increase their holdings.

Although these recent broadcasts indicate the enemy's continuing desire to mount some kind of military challenge to the pacification program, equally strong propaganda attention was paid to

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pacification last fall without any military follow-up.

Political Manuevering in
South Vietnam

Senator Tran Van Don has accelerated his efforts to organize and lead a political opposition. At the same time, he has felt constrained to defend himself from thinly veiled charges by President Thieu that he and his associates are not true nationalists but neutralists whose actions and programs play into the enemy's hands.

On 16 January, Don announced the formation of the "People's Bloc" in the National Assembly. He probably hopes that it can serve as the basis of a broad political organization to support his own political ambitions. Don must run for re-election to the Upper House later this year, and he is probably also looking forward to the 1971 presidential election. This is suggested by his recent efforts to gain the support of other opposition figures for the creation of an antiregime coalition.

Don has been careful to spell out that the new assembly bloc is strongly anti-Communist, that it would never consider a coalition government as a means to end the war, and that South Vietnam should not disengage itself from the free world. He has reiterated, however, that South Vietnam's relations with the West must be on the basis of equality. These remarks were made in rebuttal to several recent speeches by Thieu castigating political opportunists in the

country. The President charged that politicians and organizations that play on the theme of neutrality or advocate a "third force" were helping the Communist cause, and he demanded that good nationalists "exterminate" all such movements.

Meanwhile, Don's present political organization, the National Salvation Front, has charged that the government, on Thieu's orders, is preventing it from registering as a legal political party. The Interior Ministry is reportedly holding the organization's application until further information regarding the front's membership is provided. The front insists that such information is not required by the political parties law. The chairman of the Upper House Judiciary Committee has promised to look into the matter, and a public airing of this dispute could prove embarrassing to the government and could generate sympathy for Don's opposition stance.

In another political development, labor leader Tran Quoc Buu has formally withdrawn his Farmer-Worker Association from the Lien Minh front in anticipation of transforming the association into a political party. Buu's new party may join the progovernment National Social Democratic Front if Buu can negotiate a satisfactory arrangement with President Thieu. Buu has generally been progovernment, and there is little chance he would join an opposition movement, especially if he could not control it.

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North Vietnamese Economic Planning

Hanoi's economic plan for 1970 gives increased emphasis to the production of food and consumer goods as the main task in the coming year. Although few details are available, this is the thrust of two speeches in early January by North Vietnam's vice premier and leading foreign aid negotiator. The war received a large play in these speeches, but it was not emphasized as the country's main task as it had been in the past few years. The repair and expansion of the vital supply lines to the South were also soft pedaled, reflecting improvements already made in this sector in 1969.

Efforts in 1970 are to be focused on increasing the country's ability to feed, clothe, and house its people without so much reliance on the massive foreign inputs that have been necessary in the past few years. Such emphasis is possible now that repair of bomb damage to the major lines of communication has been essentially completed. This emphasis also reflects an awareness by the leadership that more must be done to improve the living conditions of North Vietnam's hard-pressed citizenry. Whereas the North Vietnamese people seemed to endure privation, inconvenience, and hardship with some equanimity in the bombing years, there is increasing evidence that they are

grumbling about the lack of significant improvement in their circumstances since the bombing stopped in 1968.

The Communist leadership apparently is not ready to launch an across-the-board recovery plan. Reconstruction efforts in heavy industry, a target of the US bombing program, have been assigned a secondary priority. Delay in starting reconstruction in this area probably reflects North Vietnamese fears that the US bombing program might be resumed.

Hanoi's greater attention to domestic needs also has leadership implications. The matter of priorities for the war in the South versus priorities for domestic programs in the North has long been debated within the North Vietnamese politburo. In the early 1960s these two objectives were officially given equal weight, but with the US bombing and intervention in South Vietnam, the balance shifted heavily toward the war. Once the bombing stopped, some North Vietnamese began to speak out for restoring the balance by putting more effort into correcting internal problems and deficiencies. Politburo member Truong Chinh is the most prominent figure identified with this view, and any hint that his views have become policy in the post-Ho period would strengthen the impression that he is the single most powerful leader in Hanoi today.

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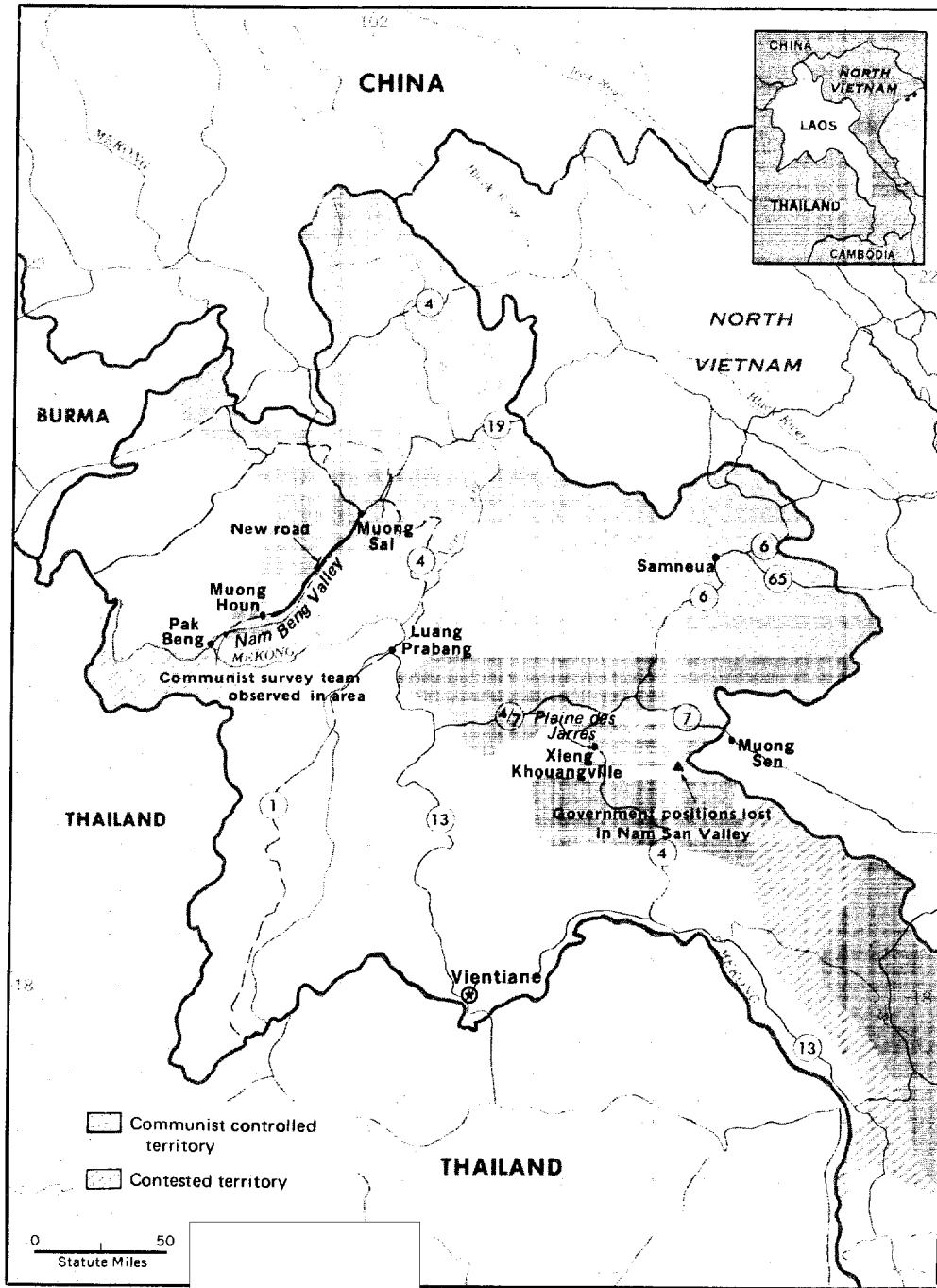
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Northern Laos: Current Situation



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COMMUNISTS IN LAOS PREPARE FOR NEW VENTURES

[redacted] Chinese Communist road construction will be pushed beyond Muong Houn this dry season. A government patrol operating in the Nam Beng Valley in early January observed a Communist survey team placing markers some 17 miles south of Muong Houn, and local villagers claim that the Pathet Lao have stated that the road will be completed to Pak Beng some time in 1970.

[redacted] some villagers from the Muong Houn area are being rounded up by Pathet

Lao authorities and sent to Muong Sai for construction training. There was earlier evidence that the Chinese used local villagers and North Vietnamese in their road building southwest of Muong Sai.

On the military front, government guerrillas have been pushed out of blocking positions near the Nam San Valley in recent days, allowing the Communists nearly unimpeded movement of men and supplies toward the southeastern edge of the Plaine des Jarres. [redacted]

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PEKING SMILES AS TALKS WITH US RESUME

The 135th session of the Warsaw talks held on 20 January was preceded by an obvious effort by Chinese diplomats and officials abroad to show a warmer attitude toward the US. This unusually positive approach by the Chinese, while not necessarily promising sudden or important progress in the talks, clearly reflects Peking's desire to continue and perhaps further develop the dialogue with Washington.

Despite such atmospherics, the Chinese are certainly not prepared to retreat from their basic position that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. Nevertheless, by striking an understanding posture the Chinese may hope to encourage some US flexibility over this key issue. At any rate, the Communists probably judge that even hints of Sino-US accommodation will greatly alarm the Chinese Nationalist regime and sow discord between Taipei and Washington. Indeed, the resumption of the talks in Warsaw has already raised hackles on Taiwan; this week a prominent Taipei newspaper that reflects government views branded the talks as an "adventure in American opportunism."

Peking's forthcoming approach also is prompted in large part by its desire to aggravate Soviet fears of a Sino-US rapprochement and to increase China's international leverage in its dispute with Moscow.

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Mean- while, Chinese military attachés at receptions in Paris and Warsaw last week greeted and shook hands with their US counterparts--the first such friendly encounters ever to take place between these officials.

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SECRET**EUROPE**

Some curious editorials and articles have recently been appearing in Pravda and Izvestia on abstract problems of leadership and decision-making. No one article does more than hint ambiguously at difficulties in these areas and each could be read as referring solely to local leaders. Cumulatively, they are beginning to suggest increased tension and politicking among the top leaders. With the exception of Premier Kosygin, most of them have been out of sight for several weeks.

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Tito is preparing to leave this weekend for a month's tour of nonaligned states in Africa, seeking to establish a counterweight to the USSR and the US. Prior to departing, he consulted with Romanian Premier Maurer on using the concept of European security as a means of lessening Soviet pressures on their respective states. He also sent his foreign minister to Hungary as part of the effort to re-establish the close ties that were frayed by the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The Council of the European Communities this week reopened debate on some of the basic problems of community financing, supposedly resolved last month. The French have reconsidered their previous agreement to increase budgetary powers for the European Parliament and want to keep budgetary control firmly in the council's hands.

High on the agenda of the UN General Assembly's outer space committee, which met this week, is an attempt to complete the space liability convention on rules for compensating damages resulting from space-related accidents. Other key topics will be the US proposal for international co-operation to perfect techniques for surveying earth resources, and a study of the feasibility of internationally controlled satellites broadcasting directly to individual nations.

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SPAIN AND USSR PREPARE FOR CLOSER RELATIONS

Spanish Foreign Minister Lopez Bravo's meeting at the Moscow airport last month with Soviet Foreign Ministry division chief Kovalev may well enhance the possibility that some type of subdiplomatic relations will be established between the two countries. A basic shift in Spain's foreign policy orientation is unlikely, however.

Although the Spanish Foreign Ministry insists that the meeting on 26 December was not prearranged, many Spanish and other observers are skeptical. Moscow had been advised that Lopez Bravo was on an SAS flight over the Soviet Union to attend the Philippine presidential inauguration. The plane, expected to refuel at Tashkent, came down at Moscow, and the meeting took place during the three-hour stopover. Madrid says the diversion was due to the weather, but the SAS manager in Moscow attributes it to "unspecified reasons."

Spanish sources have taken divergent attitudes toward the meeting. An officially inspired story in Pueblo said the USSR had asked for an exchange of high diplomatic functionaries. The press also gave great play to the favorable publicity accorded the stopover in the foreign press and quoted predictions of diplomatic relations in the near future.

The Madrid government may believe that building up the trip's importance will help Spain in coming negotiations with the US by

dangling the possibility of a foreign policy realignment. The coverage may also be linked to Madrid's effort to make Spain seem more acceptable throughout Europe, thereby improving its chances for an agreement with the European Communities.

On the other hand, the US Embassy in Madrid reports that the Spanish Foreign Ministry seemed to minimize the significance of the visit, possibly to soften the impact on old-guard military officers and in Falange political circles.

For over a year, Soviet and Spanish officials have had discreet contacts to discuss marine and fishery agreements and the exchange of press offices. During 1969, they concluded an agreement making port facilities of each country available to merchant vessels of the other. Spain's further contacts with Moscow will probably follow along the lines Madrid has used in improving relations with three other East European countries. First, "non-official" interbank payment arrangements to cover trade transactions were concluded; next, cultural contacts were encouraged; and then formal commercial and consular relations were established and diplomatic status was accorded the head of the consular mission. Full diplomatic relations with these countries are still under consideration.

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MOSCOW IS SENSITIVE ON STRATEGIC ARMS ISSUE

The Soviet press has described the preliminary round of strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) as a success. Moscow continues to be wary, however, of a possible US commitment to an expanded ABM defense, and of US progress in developing a multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicle (MIRV). At the same time, the USSR may be building a case to use against the US should the talks fail or become hopelessly bogged down. At the very least, it is playing to the galleries with the expectation that the US will adopt a more forthcoming attitude when the talks resume.

Recent Soviet news commentary suggests that the USSR is becoming increasingly sensitive to US political trends on the ABM issue. The military newspaper Red Star responded to Defense Secretary Laird's remarks on 7 January regarding the possible expansion of the Safeguard system by citing the New York Times warning that this could exert a "negative influence" on the forthcoming SALT round in Vienna and might prove "excessively provocative" to the USSR. Pravda and Izvestia have also criticized the Secretary's statements as evidence that the US military-industrial complex is firmly against any measures aimed at curbing the arms race, but they failed to echo Red Star's explicit warning. The Soviet Foreign Ministry press chief implied on 13 January that Laird was trying to "create obstacles" for the talks.

There has been far less public comment on MIRV, but the Soviets

diligently report US domestic opposition to the development of multiple re-entry vehicles. TASS noted on 9 January that MIRV testing could create a "serious obstacle" for further talks. More recently TASS referred to a MIRV moratorium as the "single most important issue" confronting the American people after the war in Vietnam.

The Soviet press has long charged that certain US circles favor ABM and MIRV systems in order to maintain military "supremacy" over the USSR. The current articles imply that ABM and MIRV are the two US programs causing Soviet disarmament experts the most difficulty at this time. The USSR has long maintained that acknowledgment of its strategic equality with the US is a prime requisite for success in the talks, and it certainly wants to deter the US from deploying weapons systems that would appear to suggest a measure of technological superiority.

During the last three years, the Soviet regime has appeared to be of more than one mind with regard to SALT. Some recent Soviet commentaries have discussed opposition to arms control in a manner that appears to be obliquely critical of Moscow's own military industrial complex in the context of disarmament problems. The military press, on the other hand, continues to deny the existence of such a Soviet interest group. Thus, the debate in Moscow over SALT apparently continues, although somewhat muted.

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NATO STUDIES FORCE REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE

A special NATO working group convened on 22 January to renew the Allied effort to develop a negotiating position on possible force reductions by members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. By 20 April the group will attempt to produce illustrations on ways in which opposing military units might be scaled down to reduce the risks and costs of the present confrontation and still maintain a balance of forces.

The working group's assignment is the result of decisions made at last month's meeting of the NATO foreign ministers in Brussels and looks forward to the next ministerial meeting to be held this May in Italy. It represents an intensification of the Allied preparations, begun in June 1968, for eventual East-West talks on this subject. So far the Soviet Union has not indicated its readiness to participate in such negotiations.

Last week the senior political advisers of the North Atlantic Council provided the predominantly military working group with fresh guidelines for developing illustrations of the probable course of events if NATO were to choose one of two approaches as the basis for entering into an agreement with the pact on force reductions. The first approach assumes that the withdrawal of military units on one side would be effected in direct proportion to the reduction of the same sorts

of units on the other side. The second approach acknowledges that variations in the structure and capabilities of opposing forces makes directly proportional withdrawals impractical, but assumes that mutual and undiminished security can be achieved by non-equivalent reductions.

Under the first approach the working group has been instructed to examine two possibilities-- a 10-percent reduction of ground forces on both sides, and a 30 percent reduction of ground and associated air forces. The withdrawals would apply to both indigenous and foreign units stationed in West Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands, as well as in East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

The political advisers were less explicit in their instructions regarding the second approach, reflecting its complexity and the doubts of some of the Allies that the East would accept this concept. This skepticism arises from the assumption that under this approach the Communist countries would have to withdraw a greater number of forces than would NATO. Nevertheless, the group was asked to consider a range of Allied reductions in central Europe in excess of 10 percent and the corresponding but unequal withdrawals that might be expected of the Warsaw Pact.

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FINNISH COMMUNISTS AGREE TO COMPROMISE

After nine months of difficult negotiations under heavy Soviet pressure, the liberal and conservative wings of the Finnish Communist Party (FCP) have reached an elaborate compromise, thus averting a final split in the party. In view of unresolved differences between the factions, however, the agreement may prove to be short-lived.

The dispute between the wings broke out dramatically at the party's congress last April when conservative delegates stalked out in protest against the liberal makeup of the new central committee. The conservatives then flouted party discipline by setting up a network of organizations paralleling those of the FCP and by issuing a newspaper of their own. Much of the conservatives' invective was aimed at the compromises on social and economic policy laboriously arrived at by the FCP leadership with the other political parties in the center-left government coalition. The FCP leadership was also berated for its refusal to back down from its condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and for "revisionist" deviations from the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The liberal leadership at first refused to deal with the conservative dissidents. After repeated admonitions from Moscow, however, the liberals submitted a series of proposals to end the dispute. The conservatives rejected each proposal in turn until Moscow advised them recently that it could no

longer tolerate their continued intransigence. Negotiations then were quickly concluded. Under the terms of the compromise, the conservatives will receive minority representation on an enlarged party central committee and politburo, and will be awarded a specially created vice chairmanship. They will also be allowed to continue publishing their newspaper. They will be obliged, however, to dissolve their network of parallel organizations, accept the continuance in office of the elected liberal leaders, and support FCP participation in the center-left government.

Despite protestations by leaders of the two wings that a small step has been taken toward achieving party unity, it is generally acknowledged that the compromise is only a tactical device designed to facilitate the FCP's efforts in the March parliamentary elections. The conservatives anticipate eventual liberal retaliation for their opposition activity, regardless of the extent to which they participate in the election campaign. On the other hand, the liberals fear that the conservatives will attempt to use their newly won party offices to radicalize party policies, thus damaging the party's chances for staying in the government following the elections. Once the elections are out of the way, it seems likely that the fundamental differences between the two groups will again emerge to threaten party unity.

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EASTERN EUROPE MUTES MILITARY SPENDING PLANS

East European Warsaw Pact countries apparently are following the Soviet Union's lead by announcing more modest increases in their military budgets for 1970 than was the case last year. The increases, which range from 6 to 12 percent, are proportionately larger than the one-percent increase announced by the USSR, however. Yugoslavia, not a member of the Warsaw Pact, plans an increase of 14 percent, slightly larger than last year's. The military budgets in all these countries account for approximately the same percentage of total budgets as in 1969.

Although smaller than those in 1968, the increases in military spending indicate that the Warsaw Pact governments intend to continue with plans to modernize and upgrade their military arsenals. The smaller increases may be due partly to the cyclical nature of expenditures for imports of military equipment. That is, the introduction of new models occurs over a span of some years, with purchases, deliv-

eries, and payments for military hardware spread unevenly, rather than at a constant rate. Expenditures, therefore, would rise substantially in some years and relatively little in others. Moreover, these governments may be heeding Soviet advice to play down defense spending in view of the ongoing SALT talks.

Stated military budgets are believed to indicate the general trend of defense expenditures in Eastern Europe, although they are not comprehensive statements of all military-related expenditures. The major categories included in the overt defense budgets are outlays to pay military personnel, to procure equipment and supplies, and to cover maintenance costs for equipment and buildings. Expenditures for military research and development, which are not a major component of military spending in Eastern Europe, probably are hidden elsewhere in the budget.

Eastern Europe : Budgeted Military Expenditures (in local currency)

Country (and currency)	1969 Planned (in millions)	1970 Planned (in millions)	1969 Percentage Change From 1968	1970 Percentage Change From 1969	Military Expenditures as Percentage of Total Budget	
					1969	1970
Albania (leks)	420	N.A.	+38.2	N.A.	9.1	N.A.
Bulgaria (leva)	302.5	324	+15.9	7.1	6.0	6.2
Czechoslovakia (crowns)	11,925	12,600	+10.1	+5.7	8.9	7.5
East Germany (DM)	6,300	6,747	+8.6	7.1	8.5	8.5
Hungary (forints)	7,956	8,898	+25.5	+11.8	5.1	5.2
Poland (zlotys)	33,300	35,300	+16.3	+6.0	9.7	9.3
Rumania (lei)	6,410	7,052	+23.1	+10.0	4.2	4.8
Yugoslavia (dinars)	6,933	7,903	+13.8	+14.0	60.4*	60.0*

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*This percentage is much higher for Yugoslavia because Belgrade's federal budget actually accounts for little more than half of total government

expenditures, and does not include investment expenditures.

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Real increases in military spending are a result of increased costs for more sophisticated equipment and the higher expenses associated with operating and maintaining more advanced equipment. Some of the East European countries also have granted pay raises to their military personnel. Moreover, in the past few years, the USSR has increased its pressure on Warsaw Pact members to contribute more heavily to pact operations.

For the second consecutive year, Hungary and Romania have planned the largest proportional increases in defense spending among the Warsaw Pact countries. Hungary, whose forces have not been among the most highly mechanized in Eastern Europe, may be attempting to improve its military position. Romania probably is continuing with its efforts to develop a larger indigenous military equipment manufacturing industry and is procuring more sophisticated equipment from the USSR.

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ROMANIA OPTIMISTIC ABOUT RELATIONS WITH THE WARSAW PACT

Premier Maurer has attempted to put Romania's relationship with the pact into perspective and to head off undue speculation in Washington. In a recent conversation with US Ambassador Meeker, Maurer said that Romania's participation or nonparticipation in pact maneuvers should not be misread or exaggerated. He added that Bucharest's allies have shown considerable understanding for Romania's reservations on such maneuvers. The premier's remarks stand in sharp contrast with the gloomy picture Romanian officials painted a year ago, when they feared Warsaw Pact intervention.

Bucharest still has not resolved the problem of discharging its obligations to the pact without compromising its carefully nurtured independence. It last hosted maneuvers in 1962 and most recently has limited its participation to token forces and observ-

ers. Although Maurer avoided saying that pact maneuvers would be held in Romania this year, he did not deny the possibility and even advanced a rationale for them, should they occur. He reaffirmed his country's opposition to such maneuvers, but added that forces in the pact and in NATO are working to strengthen their respective blocs. Romania, he contended "is actually working in the other direction, but its geopolitical position necessitates taking a realistic course." Maurer was quick to add that should Romania host maneuvers, they would be limited and carefully controlled to ensure the prompt departure of all foreign troops.

In early December, General Constantine Popa, the deputy chief of staff, indicated that the subject of maneuvers in Romania was under discussion.

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Bucharest might accept maneuvers involving a limited number of foreign troops. Like Maurer, Popa stressed that this possibility should not arouse alarm.

Maurer explicitly stated that Romania's vital interests are at stake in moves toward European detente that might result from any Soviet-US talks. The Ceausescu regime is haunted by the fear that such talks could result in de facto

recognition of the Brezhnev doctrine that a solely Soviet sphere of influence exists in Eastern Europe, thus giving Moscow a free hand to deal with Romania. In the communiqué following Maurer's visit of 12-16 January to Yugoslavia, the Balkans' two maverick Communist states strongly appealed for a European detente based on respect for the sovereignty and integrity of all states. [REDACTED]

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SECRET**MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA**

Israel is continuing its campaign to cause domestic trouble for Egypt's Nasir by striking military targets in the Nile Delta area, lately hitting only nine miles from Cairo. In addition, it is making almost daily air strikes against Egyptian positions along the Suez Canal and the Red Sea coast. In a somewhat different fillip on the 22nd, Israeli forces attacked and occupied an Egyptian island in the Gulf of Suez.

On its border with Jordan, Tel Aviv again displayed sensitivity about its potash plant at the southern end of the Dead Sea. In response to two rocket attacks by fedayeen over the past weekend, the Israelis launched a mechanized/armored force on a 20-hour "combing" operation inside Jordan. The number of casualties is not known, but Amman reports that, in addition to fedayeen, both Jordanian and Saudi regulars were engaged.

Meanwhile, Jordan's foreign minister has been holding discussions with Egyptian leaders in Cairo, presumably as a preliminary to King Husayn's scheduled arrival on 5 February. Arab leaders of the so-called "confrontation" states plan to hold a "little summit" in Cairo following the Husayn-Nasir talks, probably to consider defense matters and, perhaps, recent US proposals for peace.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Libya's ruling military junta tightened its control of the government by naming its leader, Colonel Qaddafi, as prime minister and defense minister, and by appointing four more of its members to the cabinet. In Iraq, an abortive coup on 20 January has resulted in a number of summary executions and has put a further strain on Iraqi-Iranian relations. Baghdad accuses Tehran of complicity in the affair, and each country has expelled the other's ambassador.

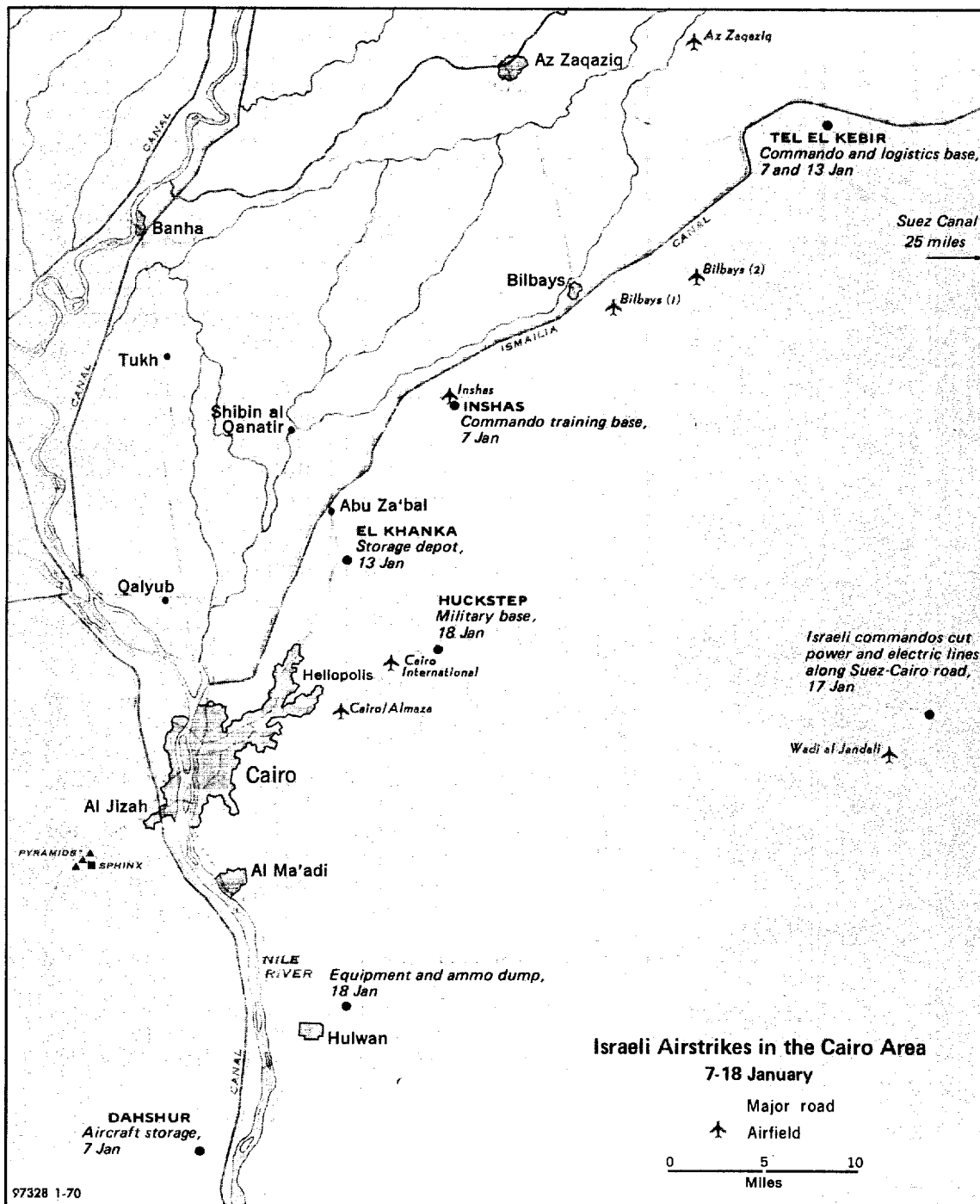
The Nigerian Government has encountered no serious security problems in its occupation of Biafra and is continuing to express a conciliatory attitude toward the conquered secessionists. The food relief distribution system has been disrupted by the federal occupation, but official reporting does not indicate that civilian refugees are being mistreated on any significant scale.

In East Pakistan, a clash at a mass political rally on 18 January resulted in at least two deaths and hundreds of injuries. Further disorders subsequently occurred as students and leftists in Dacca sponsored a week of meetings, demonstrations, and general strikes in memory of last year's successful agitation against the unpopular regime of Ayub Khan.

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ISRAEL STEPS UP THE ACTION

This week Israeli bombs fell closer to Cairo than ever before. Tel Aviv thus apparently hopes both to hamper the Egyptian military effort and to injure Nasir's position as leader.

On four separate occasions since 7 January, the Israelis have hit at Egyptian military installations in the Nile Delta area, coming as close as nine miles to Cairo. The targets included military bases as well as storage areas for weapons and ammunition. While maintaining their almost daily air strikes against Egyptian positions on the Suez Canal and along the Red Sea coast, the Israelis also struck to within 36 miles of Cairo along the main Suez-Cairo highway, cutting power and telephone lines, and hitting other targets.

turmoil that Tel Aviv hopes will bring about Nasir's downfall. Foreign Minister Abba Eban, usually a very careful diplomat, admitted publicly last week that he thought the chances for peace would be 50 percent better "with Nasir gone." And Prime Minister Golda Meir recently told an Israeli interviewer that she "would not shed a tear" if the Egyptian people changed the regime in Cairo.

The Egyptian reaction is not yet clear. Apparently, many Egyptians have already braced themselves for a protracted struggle, and thus stoically accept the occasional blows they must suffer. This has been the theme of official government pronouncements, which continually exhort the populace to remain steadfast in the face of Israeli provocations.

Raids near Cairo, but outside the city proper, will probably not elicit any dramatic Egyptian response. Cairo knows its forces are still militarily inferior, and it has been reluctant to risk the large losses inherent in spectacular military actions. Nasir may well be satisfied to continue harassing Israeli forces in the Sinai, though possibly increasing the rate somewhat. Internal pressures stimulated by the Israeli raids, however, could eventually force him to make some out-of-the-ordinary military response. In the meantime, the Egyptians will take what solace they can from their occasional small successes, and Cairo will continue to play up the real or imagined losses inflicted on the enemy.

Military factors are only part of the motivation behind the new Israeli tactic. Politically, the most important objective is almost certainly to create domestic

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NIGERIAN REOCCUPATION OF BIAFRA PROCEEDING

The federal government has encountered no serious security problems in the former enclave, and has continued its conciliatory attitude toward the conquered secessionists. General Ojukwu, meanwhile, evidently has not given up the Biafran cause.

There is still no good information on what has happened to the approximately 40,000 secessionist soldiers. It seems likely, however, that most have gone into the bush or have shed their uniforms and joined the refugees. Any groups of soldiers with access to arms caches could continue to present a security problem to the federal forces for some time.

Large numbers of civilians have returned to towns controlled by federal troops and many others have been seen moving freely along the roads. Official reporting does not support allegations that these civilians have been mistreated on any significant scale, although some incidents of rape and looting have occurred. The physical condition of the civilians varies from relatively good in

the northern sector to poor in some parts of the south. The food relief distribution system in the south has been disrupted by the federal occupation, and the actions of some undisciplined federal troops have made relief transport difficult, if not impossible, in some areas.

General Effiong, the former Biafran chief of staff who surrendered in Lagos last week, has now returned and is working to reassure the secessionists of their safety. Effiong and the civilian leaders who accompanied him to Lagos are cooperating with Ibo officials who had been appointed earlier by the federal government in putting together a civilian administration for the area.

Last week, General Ojukwu issued a statement claiming Biafra would survive and calling for an international force to prevent "genocide." He probably is trying to keep alive the concept of Biafra as well as to retain some organizational framework in the hope that the federal occupation will go badly.

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SECRET**WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

High-ranking officials from all Latin American nations will convene in Caracas early next week for a meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council's Special Committee. The delegates will be discussing trade, aid, commerce, and US policy toward Latin America, and a ministerial-level meeting may follow.

Efforts to normalize relations between El Salvador and Honduras are continuing. Bilateral talks between the two feuding states are to begin on 26 January in San Jose, Costa Rica. The negotiators are expected to discuss the border and immigration problems as well as restoration of trade and diplomatic relations, but an early settlement seems unlikely. Very limited progress has been made in related Central American Common Market negotiations. The economics ministers' meeting on 9 January was unproductive, and another meeting is scheduled to begin on 12 February.

Frustration over continuing Communist terrorism in Guatemala City is causing dissension among government officials, and military unity seems to be coming under increasing strain. President Mendez has removed Minister of Government Sosa and has made some military command changes because of the officers' suspected disloyalty. The continuing shifts of military posts may add to the general discontent within the armed forces.

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Security police in Paraguay have arrested a number of persons suspected of plotting against the Stroessner government. Most of those arrested are members of the Colorado Popular Movement, a non-Communist dissident group. Without the support of the military officers in command positions, there would be little prospect of unseating the President, but the government is taking no chances.

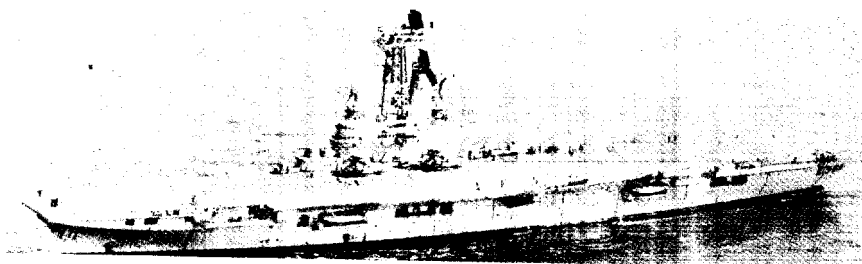
In the Dominican Republic, President Balaguer's purges in the governing Reformist Party have resulted in a formal party split. Santo Domingo's Mayor Lluberres, who was recently suspended from the Reformist Party for one year, has led his followers into a newly recognized party that will support Vice President Lora in the presidential election scheduled for May. Other dissidents probably will follow Lluberres, but Balaguer apparently believes it is an acceptable political cost for making the organization completely responsive to his wishes.

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LATIN NAVIES BUYING NEW SHIPS



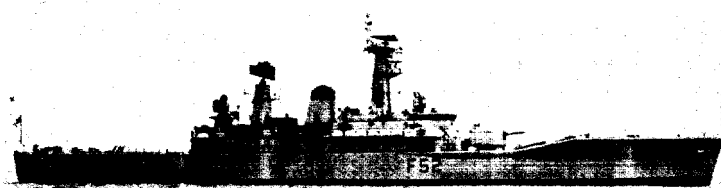
Argentine carrier "25th of May"



British Oberon-class submarine



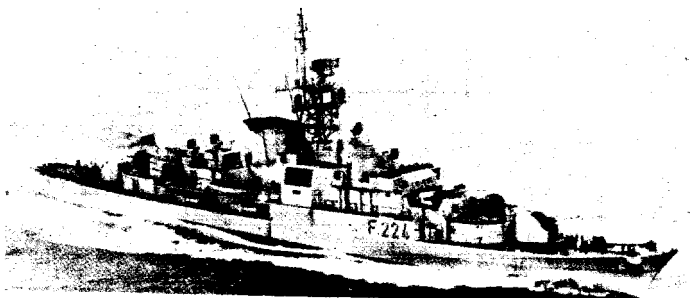
US A4B Skyhawk



British Leander-class destroyer



British Daring-class destroyer



West German Koln-class destroyer

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LATIN AMERICAN NAVIES MOVING TO ACQUIRE MODERN SHIPS

Four major Latin American countries are well along in their plans to acquire new ships for their navies. Although these purchases may improve the rather limited capabilities of the fleets involved, they will not do much to change the navies' respective strengths.

All major combat ships in the naval inventories of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru are of US or British manufacture, and most were built during or shortly before World War II. The navies are oriented toward national defense and antisubmarine warfare, but their major operational efforts in recent years have been devoted to participation in exercises with other navies and to maintaining a close patrol of foreign fishing fleets. Joint exercises, especially those that include the US, have made the shortcomings of the Latin American warships obvious, and each of the navies has pressed for newer and more modern equipment.

The most ambitious program is that of Argentina. In 1968, Buenos Aires purchased an aircraft carrier from the Netherlands to complement its existing carrier. The new carrier, the "25th of May," has been modernized to include a steam catapult and a canted deck, and Argentina is now interested in equipping it with A4B aircraft from the US. Both Argentine carriers and Brazil's carrier are sister ships of British manufacture dating from World War II.

In addition, Argentina has contracted for two West German submarines, which will be assembled with

German help at Argentina's Rio Santiago naval base. The government will probably purchase one or two type 42 British destroyers, a new design that Britain has yet to put into operation.

Brazil is also involved in an ambitious program to improve its antisubmarine warfare capability. The Brazilians are interested in buying at least five new destroyers, possibly the Koln class from West Germany, and have already contracted for two Oberon-class British submarines. Brazil had originally tried to arrange a deal with the US for five additional US Bronstein-class destroyers, some of which would have been built in Brazilian shipyards. The Brazilians apparently now have changed their minds.

Both Chile and Peru are also buying from the British. Chile will get two Leander-class destroyers and two Oberon submarines. In 1972, Peru will buy two older (and cheaper) Daring-class destroyers as well as two Oberons, all for 1972 delivery.

Each of these countries watches its neighbors closely, and often uses the rationale that it must buy new equipment to keep pace with the others, especially if there is a traditional hostility between them (for example, Chile fears Argentina, and Peru is wary of Chile). Nevertheless, the upgrading of the navies, like the series of aircraft purchases over the last two years, has not changed the relative strengths of the fleets. The new ships, like the new airplanes, will replace obsolete craft that can no longer be maintained efficiently.

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COSTA RICAN ELECTIONS APPROACH

The presidential election on 1 February will pit two ex-presidents against each other. At the moment, Jose "Pepe" Figueres of the National Liberation Party (PLN) appears to have the lead over Mario Echandi of the governing National Unification (UN). The array of minor parties in the contest, however, may deny either of the major candidates the required 40 percent plurality and seems almost certain to cost the PLN the majority it has enjoyed in the legislature for 16 years. If no candidate receives at least 40 percent of the vote, a runoff election will be held in April.

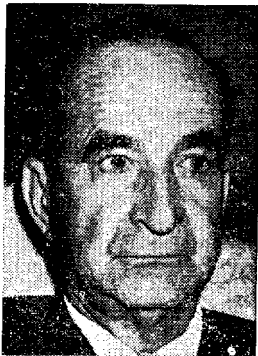
Public indifference to the mudslinging campaign is indicative of the youthful electorate's impatience with the old politicians who have long dominated the political scene and whose personal antagonisms date back to the civil war in 1948. Both Figueres and Echandi were nominated by tactics that split their

parties and accelerated motion toward party realignment. UN defector Virgilio Calvo is in the current race with his new National Front Party, and PLN dissident Rodrigo Carazo plans to organize a new political group later this year. The balloting, therefore, promises to end the 20-year pattern of an electorate closely divided between supporters and opponents of the PLN.

Another significant feature of the campaign and a potential cause of postelection violence is the participation of an openly identified vehicle for Communist candidates, the Socialist Action Party. Right wing groups have threatened an armed uprising in the event the Communists win representation in the legislature

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Major Presidential Candidates



Jose Figueres



Mario Echandi

Costa Rica will probably weather the postelection storm, but the breakup of the large parties and the likely inclusion of Communists in the legislature may make for a particularly difficult period. The next chief executive is likely to have only the qualified support of a fractured party, and passage of legislation will require opposition cooperation which will be hard to secure following the bitterly contested election.

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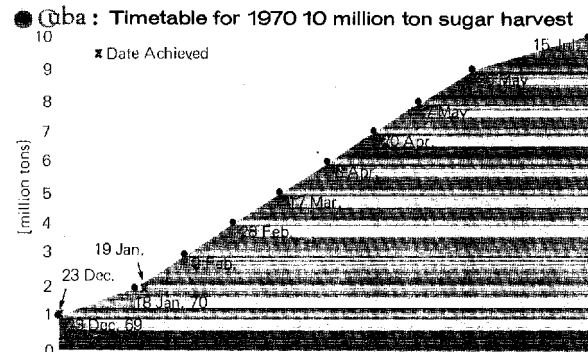
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CUBAN SUGAR HARVEST OFF SCHEDULE

Castro has admitted that the 1970 sugar harvest is falling somewhat behind schedule. Production of the second million tons, due on 18 January, was achieved on the 19th, and even if the workers intensify their efforts, further delays are likely.

In a progress report on the effort to produce a record ten million tons, Castro stated that heavy rainfall in several provinces during the first week of January caused delays. He showed particular concern over the low production figures for Oriente and Camaguey provinces, traditionally abundant sugar areas, for which he blamed "subjective" factors. He demanded increased efforts to achieve daily production norms, and emphasized that delays this early in the harvest will be increasingly difficult to make up, as the most arduous phase is yet to come.

The tone of Castro's report was more somber than his previously



optimistic statements. In December, for example, he claimed the harvest was a full day ahead of schedule and enthusiastically predicted that the final goal would be achieved on time. He now seems convinced, however, that a letdown in worker discipline is delaying the harvest, warning that "soft people who fold up at the first difficulty" will not be tolerated.

Foreign delegations have gone into the canefields for propaganda purposes. Small groups of "canecutters" have been sent to Cuba from several Communist countries to show solidarity with the Cuban revolution, and diplomatic personnel from the Soviet, Bulgarian, and Romanian embassies in Havana have performed "symbolic" cane-cutting tasks. The Venceremos Brigade, a delegation of 216 US leftist liberal youths given wide coverage in Cuban news media, has finished its six-week stint of cane harvesting and reportedly will be replaced by a similar group in early February.



US youth group in Cuba for sugar harvest

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FRICTION CONTINUES BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND GUYANA

Venezuela has deployed troops to the Guyana border, probably as a show of force as well as a contingency move. Two army battalions have been ordered to the area by the minister of defense.

The troop movement would put Venezuela in a favorable position should it decide to take military action against Guyana. There are no indications, however, that President Caldera is planning action against Guyana at this time.

The build-up is probably designed to complement Venezuelan diplomatic pressure to extend the life of the Venezuela-Guyana Border Commission. The commission, established in 1966 to resolve the dispute involving Venezuela's claim to three fifths of Guyana's territory, is scheduled to end next month. The

disputants then have until June to settle the matter, or the case goes to the United Nations secretary general for his decision. Venezuela lacks confidence in its case and is seeking an extension of the commission, but Guyana believes that further talks would be fruitless.

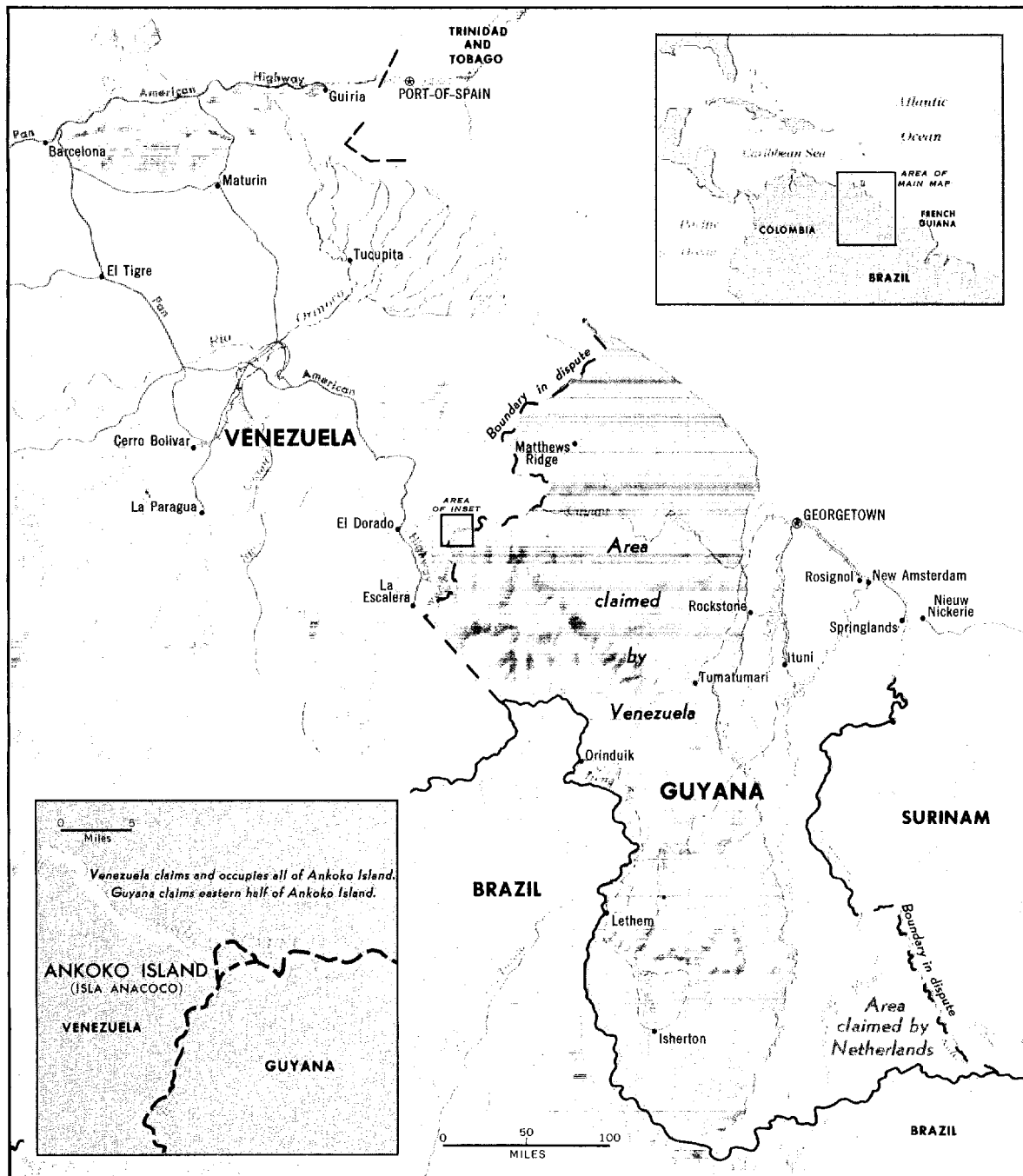
Hawkish elements in Venezuela, including some of the military, have despaired of a peaceful settlement of the claim in their favor and have been urging forceful seizure of the disputed territory. Guyana sent a protest note to Venezuela on 21 January referring to the troop build-up on the border as a threat to her security and requesting clarification of the action. Guyanese nervousness about Venezuela's intentions could combine with the proximity of armed forces of the two countries to produce border incidents.

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